

LETTER  
OF THE  
SECRETARY OF WAR,

COMMUNICATING,

*In obedience to a resolution of the Senate of the 9th instant, information in relation to legislation necessary to fix and establish the position of the Chicago and Rock Island railroad at Rock Island, Illinois, as to enable the War Department to occupy said island for military purposes.*

---

MARCH 23, 1866.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and the Militia.  
MARCH 27, 1866.—Ordered to be printed.

---

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
*Washington City, March 21, 1866.*

SIR: In compliance with the Senate's resolution of the 9th of March, directing the Secretary of War to inform the Senate what legislation is necessary to fix the position of the Chicago and Rock Island railroad, and to enable the War Department to occupy for military purposes Rock Island and the islands adjacent to it, &c., I have the honor to transmit herewith the Chief of Ordnance's report of the 14th instant on the subject.

Very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

EDWIN M. STANTON,  
*Secretary of War.*

Hon. L. F. S. FOSTER,  
*President of the Senate.*

---

ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT, WAR DEPARTMENT,  
*Washington, March 14, 1866.*

SIR: In answer to the Senate resolution of the 9th instant, in reference to further legislation respecting the occupancy of Rock Island, Illinois, for military purposes, I have to report:

It is essential to the proper execution of the provisions of the act of April 19, 1864, that the present location of the Chicago and Rock Island railroad on Rock Island, and the bridges leading thereto, should be changed so as to fix the position of the road, which is essentially necessary on the lower end of the island, and to establish wagon roads across each bridge, open to the government at all times, for the transportation of materials and the ready access or egress of persons in government employ, free of charge, to or from the island. It is thought that the present position of the railroad on Rock Island is without authority of law, and is held merely on sufferance. It is not such as to accord with the purposes of the government in occupying the island for military pur-

poses ; but may be made so by the change of location, and the establishment of wagon roads across the bridges, as above suggested ; in consideration of which, a permanent right of way may be granted and secured by law to the railroad company, with such other aid from the government in effecting the same as may be adjudged to be fair and equitable by the board of commissioners authorized under the act of April 19, 1864, and may be approved by the Secretary of War. The new location of the railroad, with the extent of ground to be occupied and held by the company, and the character and all details of the wagon-road bridges, should be subject to the decision of the Secretary of War, so as to make the whole best accord with the purposes of the government in a military point of view.

The act of April 19, 1864, before referred to, gives authority to the Secretary of War to take and hold full, complete, and permanent possession, in behalf of the United States, of all the lands and shores of the island of Rock Island, in the State of Illinois ; and the only additional legislation that will be necessary to effect the same in regard to the small, contiguous islands, known as Benham's, Wilson's, and Winnebago islands, will be to extend the provisions of that act so as to include them. Their ownership and occupancy by the United States are necessary for carrying out the military purposes of the act, in addition to the ownership and occupancy of the lands and shores of Rock Island already provided for.

The claims for property on the small islands and of those whose property on Rock Island has been taken in pursuance of law amount to \$293,600. That amount, however, is considered too great, and the claims are subject to examination by a board of commissioners, as provided by the law, who are to ascertain the true and just amount of each, and report the same to the United States circuit court, which is to order payment. The appropriation necessary to liquidate these claims cannot exceed the amount above stated—\$293,600—but may, and probably will, be less. I would suggest an appropriation for this purpose of that sum, or so much thereof as may be necessary, to pay claims for such amounts respectively as may be reported by commissioners, and ordered by the United States circuit court to be paid.

It is estimated that the requisite appropriation for securing water-power at the head of Rock Island will be \$100,000. This power will be necessary for carrying on work at the arsenal of construction directed by law to be established on the island, and it should and may be secured in such manner as to improve the healthfulness of the island and adjacent main lands, and also the navigation of the river.

To erect storehouses for the preservation of arms and other munitions of war at Rock Island arsenal, and to establish communication between the arsenal and the cities of Davenport, Iowa, and Rock Island, Illinois, there should be a present appropriation of \$100,000.

I respectfully submit the following sketch of an act such as is contemplated by the resolution :

AN ACT making further provision for the establishment of an armory and arsenal of construction, deposit, and repair on Rock Island, in the State of Illinois.

*Be it enacted, &c.,* That the Secretary of War be, and is hereby, authorized and directed to fix and establish the position of the Chicago and Rock Island railroad on the island of Rock Island, so as to best accord with the purposes of the government in its occupancy of said island for military purposes ; and, in order to effect this, he is authorized to grant to the railroad company a permanent location and right of way on and across Rock Island, to be fixed and designated by him, with such quantity of land, to be occupied and held by the company for railroad purposes, as may be necessary therefor ; and that the said grant be made on such terms and conditions, previously arranged, as will best effect and secure the purposes of the government in occupying the island.

*Be it further enacted*, That the Secretary of War be, and is hereby, authorized to grant to the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad Company such other aid, pecuniary or otherwise, toward effecting the change in the present location of their road on Rock Island as may be adjudged to be fair and equitable by the board of commissioners, authorized under the act of April 19, 1864, entitled "An act in addition to an act for the establishment of certain arsenals," and may be approved by him.

*Be it further enacted*, That the provisions of the act, approved April 19, 1864, entitled "An act in addition to an act for the establishment of certain arsenals," be so extended as to include the small islands contiguous to Rock Island, and known as Benham's, Wilson's, and Winnebago islands.

*Be it further enacted*, That the following sums be, and they are hereby, appropriated, out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated, for Rock Island arsenal, to be applied as follows, viz :

To liquidate claims for property in Benham's, Wilson's, and Winnebago islands, and for property in Rock Island which has been taken, in pursuance of law, for military purposes, two hundred and ninety-three thousand six hundred dollars, or so much thereof, and no more, as may be necessary to pay the respective claimants such amounts as may be reported by the board of commissioners, authorized by the act of April 19, 1864, and ordered by the United States circuit court to be paid to each.

To secure water-power at the head of Rock Island, one hundred thousand dollars.

To erect storehouses for the preservation of arms and other munitions of war, and to establish communication between Rock Island arsenal and the cities of Davenport, Iowa, and Rock Island, Illinois, one hundred thousand dollars.

Senate resolution of the 9th instant is herewith returned.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. B. DYER,

*Brevet Major General, Chief of Ordnance.*

Hon. E. M. STANTON,

*Secretary of War.*

